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WASHINGTON DC - Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA) announced a constitutional amendment today aimed at ensuring that courts do not place corporate interests ahead of those of average Americans. Sánchez' amendment, which comes in the wake of the January Supreme Court ruling that corporations can use company dollars to influence the democratic process, would ensure that "we the people" can choose to impose limits on political spending by corporations.

"The Supreme Court's decision opened up the floodgates for corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money on elections," said Rep. Linda Sánchez. "This amendment would protect our elections from corporate influence that can drown out the voices of average Americans."

On January 21, the Supreme Court ruled on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. In a 5-4 decision, the Court ruled that, because corporations have the same rights as individual American citizens, corporate funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections cannot be limited. This means that special interests - from Big Oil to multinational prescription drug firms - can now spend unlimited funds on advertisements and independent expenditures aimed at influencing the outcome of American elections.

The top three Fortune 500 companies in 2009 brought in an average profit of more than \$27 billion. Last year, special interests spent \$3.3 billion lobbying Congress. According to the nonpartisan group Common Cause, in every election this decade, candidates for Congress have raised more money from big donors and political committees and less money from small donors giving \$200 or less. The 2008 election was the most lopsided yet: wealthy interests put in \$8 for every \$1 from small donors.

Sánchez' amendment would clarify the situations in which a corporation may be treated as a person under Federal law and would ensure that corporations would be subject to campaign finance laws and regulations.

"Our democracy runs for the people, by the people - not by corporations with the most money," continued Sánchez. "I want to make sure these companies play by a strict set of rules."

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